



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

POLICIES

FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

SECTION 6

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

SECTION 8

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THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS



Decree of Promulgation

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

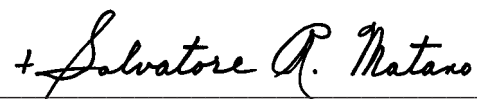
Following upon the Decree of Promulgation dated September 14, 2014, by which the policies contained in the *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester* were issued for the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation and Penance, I now wish to incorporate among these *Policies* instructions for the **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the Rite of Christian Funerals**. These *Policies* are intended to assist all our Catholic parishes and institutions to fulfill their mandate to proclaim Jesus Christ in Word and to strengthen the faithful in Sacrament.

Therefore, having consulted with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, the College of Consultors, the Pastors/ Administrators, the College of Deans and the staff of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, I hereby promulgate these additions to the *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester*, today, April 4, 2016, which become effective on May 29, 2016, the Solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi.

The *Policies* governing the Sacrament of Marriage are in process and soon will be presented for the completion of these *Policies*.

As a diocesan family, we raise our voices in prayer for our brothers and sisters who come to us with a simple request: "We would like to see Jesus." (John 12:21). May these *Policies* assist us in this privileged vocation to proclaim Jesus Christ and the Holy Gospel.

Given at the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Rochester on the fourth day of April in the year of Our Lord two thousand and sixteen, on the Solemnity of *The Annunciation of the Lord*.



The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Rochester

Attested to by:



The Reverend Father Daniel J. Condon
Chancellor

6. THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Following the example of, and by Divine mandate from Her Founder, Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church lovingly accompanies humanity at all stages of life, from the moment of conception until natural death, “going about, doing good and healing all.” (*Acts of the Apostles*, 10:38).

“The Church shows this solicitude not only by visiting those who are in poor health but also by raising them up through the Sacrament of Anointing and by nourishing them with the Eucharist during their illness when they are in danger of death.” (*Decree from the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship*, 1072).

“Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life. In illness, man experiences his powerlessness, his limitations, and his finitude.” (CCC, no. 1500). “The Church believes and confesses that among the seven Sacraments there is one especially intended to strengthen those who are being tried by illness, the Anointing of the Sick...” (CCC, no. 1511).

6.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- In the *Ritual for the Anointing of the Sick*, the meaning of human suffering and death is explained in light of God’s salvific plan, and more specifically in light of the salvific value of the sufferings undergone by Christ, the Incarnate Word, in the mystery of His passion, death and resurrection. (Cf. *PCS: Ritual for the Anointing of the Sick, Introduction*, 1-2).
- The Anointing of the Sick is the special Sacrament for baptized persons who have reached the age of reason and are dangerously ill as a result of sickness, accident or old age. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1004).
- The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick both comforts the sick and purifies them from sin and its consequences. “Those who are seriously ill need the special help of God’s grace in this time of anxiety, lest they be broken in spirit and, under the pressure of temptation, perhaps weakened in their faith.” (*PCS: Ritual for the Anointing of the Sick, Introduction*, 5).
- “This reality is in fact the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose anointing takes away sins, if any still remain, and the remnants of sin; this anointing also raises up and strengthens the soul of the sick person, arousing a great confidence in the Divine mercy...” (*De Extrema Unctione*, chapter 2).
- “‘Extreme Unction,’ which may also and more properly be called ‘Anointing of the Sick,’ is not a Sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as any one of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for that person to receive this Sacrament has certainly already arrived.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 73).
- “This Sacrament gives the grace of the Holy Spirit to those who are sick; by this grace the whole person is helped and saved, sustained by trust in God, and strengthened against the

temptations of the Evil One and against anxiety over death. Thus the sick person is able not only to bear suffering bravely, but also to fight against it. A return to physical health may follow the reception of this Sacrament if it will be beneficial to the sick person's salvation." (*PCS: Ritual for the Anointing of the Sick, Introduction*, 6).

- "If the Eucharist shows how Christ's suffering and death have been transformed into love, the Anointing of the Sick, for its part, unites the sick with Christ's self-offering for the salvation of all, so that they too, within the mystery of the communion of saints, can participate in the redemption of the world." (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 22).

6.2 CANDIDATES

- "The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick should be celebrated only when the Christian's health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age." (*PCS*, 99).
- The Anointing of the Sick is:
 - o "administered to a member of the faithful who, having reached the use of reason, begins to be in danger due to sickness or old age." (*CIC*, c. 1004 §1)
 - o "repeated if the sick person, having recovered, again becomes gravely ill or if the condition becomes more grave during the same illness." (*CIC*, c. 1004 §2).
 - o administered in case of doubt whether the sick person:
 - has attained the use of reason;
 - is dangerously ill;
 - or is dead. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1005).
 - o "administered to the sick who, when they were in possession of their faculties, at least implicitly requested it." (*CIC*, c. 1006).
- The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick cannot be administered after death is certain. However, "if there is any doubt as to whether the sick person has reached the age of reason, or is dangerously ill, or is dead, this Sacrament is to be administered." (*CIC*, c. 1005).
 - o "When a priest has been called to attend a person who is already dead..., It is appropriate that he lead the family and friends, if they are present, in some of the prayers suggested at the end of the 'Commendation of the Dying'..." (*PCS: Rite for Emergencies*, 263).
 - o "Sometimes the priest may find it necessary to explain to the family of the person who has died that Sacraments are celebrated for the living, not for the dead, and that the dead are effectively helped by the prayers of the living." (*PCS: Rite for Emergencies*, 263).
- Even though the Anointing of the Sick can be administered to those already unconscious, every effort should be made to administer it while they are still conscious, so that they can better prepare to receive the grace of the Sacrament.
- "The Anointing of the Sick is not to be conferred upon those who persevere obstinately in manifest grave sin." (*CIC*, c. 1007).
- To receive this Sacrament fruitfully, those receiving it should be reconciled to God and to the Church, at least in desire, and repent of their sins with the intention of confessing them in the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation, if and when this becomes possible. Therefore, whenever feasible, the person should be provided the opportunity to privately receive the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation with individual absolution before being anointed.
- Those receiving the Anointing of the Sick must have at least the habitual and implicit intention to receive the Sacrament. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1006).

- Catholic priests administer the Anointing of the Sick to Catholic members of the faithful alone. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844 § 1). There are two particular, and extremely rare, exceptions which may occur:
 - o **for Christians of the Orthodox Churches:**
Orthodox Christians may receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick from a Catholic priest, only when **both** of the following conditions are present:
 - He/she requests the Sacrament on his/her own initiative; and
 - He/she is properly disposed. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844 § 3).
 - o **for Christians of protestant communities:**
Other validly baptized non-Catholics (members of protestant communities) may receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick from a Catholic priest, only if **all** of the following conditions are present:
 - He/she is in danger of death;
 - He/she cannot approach a minister of their own community;
 - He/she requests the Sacrament on their own initiative;
 - He/she manifests Catholic faith regarding the Sacrament; and
 - He/she is properly disposed. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844 § 4).

6.3 PREPARATION

- The faithful should be instructed about the benefits of this Sacrament. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick should be part of the overall care and concern of the Church for the sick of the community.
- The faithful (particularly family members and friends) should encourage those who are ill and homebound or in healthcare facilities to call for the priest so that they can receive the Anointing of the Sick. (Cf. *CCC*, no. 1516).
- Catechesis should also encourage parishioners to pray for the ill and to visit the sick in order to express love and concern for them.
- The faithful, particularly extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and those who visit the sick and shut-ins, should be mindful of the sad tendency today of isolation for those who are sick and dying. Catholics who work in hospitals and hospices should strive to ensure that seriously ill people receive every possible assistance (particularly the Sacraments of Penance, Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion) to relieve their suffering in body and soul.
- All Christians should be instructed to assist the sick and dying by providing the best care possible, by personal presence, by praying and sharing God's Word.
- Pastoral care should be exercised (and proper instruction should be given, if necessary) so that the faithful are not led to confuse non-liturgical healing ceremonies with the celebration of the Sacrament of Anointing. In order to prevent confusion between non-liturgical healing services and communal celebrations of the Sacrament of the Sick, the two must never be celebrated simultaneously, but separately.

6.3.1 Effects of the Anointing the Sick

- As a true and proper Sacrament of the New Law, the Anointing of the Sick offers salvific grace, the forgiveness of sins and relief to the sick person. For the person receiving it, the specific sacramental grace has the following effects:

- o a more intimate union with Christ in his redemptive Passion, for the good of the recipient and for the good of the whole Church. (Cf. CCC, nos. 1521, 1522, 1532);
- o the strengthening, peace and courage to endure in a Christian manner the difficulties and sufferings of a serious illness or the frailty of old age. (Cf. CCC, nos. 1520, 1532);
- o the healing of the wounds of sin and the forgiveness of all venial sins, as well as mortal sins when the person is repentant but unable to receive the Sacrament of Penance/ Reconciliation. (Cf. CCC, no. 1520);
- o the recovery of physical health, if it is conducive to the salvation of the soul. (Cf. *Council of Florence: DZ 1325*, CCC, nos. 1520, 1532);
- o preparation for the passage to eternal life. “This grace is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who renews trust and faith in God and strengthens against the temptations of the evil one, the temptation to discouragement and anguish in the face of death.” (CCC, no. 1520; Cf. CCC, no. 1532).

6.4 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

- The Epistle of St. James records these words: “*Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*” (James 5:14-15).
- “The Anointing of the Sick, by which the Church commends the faithful who are dangerously ill to the suffering and glorified Lord in order that he relieve and save them, is conferred by anointing them with oil and pronouncing the words prescribed in the liturgical books.” (CIC, c. 998).
- “Like all the Sacraments, the Anointing of the Sick is a liturgical and communal celebration, whether it takes place in the family home, a hospital or church, for a single sick person or a whole group of sick persons.” (CCC, no. 1517).
- “The celebration of the Sacrament includes the following principal elements: the ‘priests of the Church’ - in silence - lay hands on the sick; they pray over them in the faith of the Church - this is the epiclesis proper to this Sacrament; they then anoint them with oil blessed, if possible, by the Bishop.” (CCC, no. 1519).
- “... If circumstances suggest it, the celebration of the Sacrament can be preceded by the Sacrament of Penance and followed by the Sacrament of the Eucharist. As the Sacrament of Christ’s Passover the Eucharist should always be the last Sacrament of the earthly journey, the ‘viaticum’ for ‘passing over’ to eternal life.” (CCC, no. 1517).
- “The communal celebration of the Anointing of the Sick, for a number of the sick together, who have been appropriately prepared and are rightly disposed, may be held in accordance with the regulations of the Diocesan Bishop.” (CIC, c. 1002; Cf. PCS, 17; PCS, 108).
 - o “During communal celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick, care must be taken that only those eligible be permitted to approach the Sacrament.” (DCD Prot. 273/89).
 - o Whether the administration of the Anointing of the Sick is in the context of Mass or a Liturgy of the Word ceremony, a proper and clear catechesis must precede the celebration to avoid any semblance of indiscriminate anointing.
 - “The practice of indiscriminately anointing numbers of people on these occasions

simply because they are ill or have reached an advanced age is to be avoided.”
(PCS, 108).

- o The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation should be made available before the ceremony so the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is not considered a substitute for the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.
- “The sick should prepare themselves to receive it with good dispositions, assisted by their pastor and the whole ecclesial community, which is invited to surround the sick in a special way through their prayers and fraternal attention.” (CCC, no. 1516).
- “The Apostolic Constitution *Sacram unktionem infirmorum*, following upon the Second Vatican Council, established that henceforth, in the Roman Rite, the following be observed:

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is given to those who are seriously ill by anointing them on the forehead and hands with duly blessed oil - pressed from olives (or from other plants) - saying, only once: ‘*Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.*’”(CCC, no. 1513).
- The revised ritual, *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum* (1983), provides a continuous Rite of Reconciliation, Anointing, and Viaticum for those who are dying.
- “Although not required by law, parishes and institutions sometimes maintain records for ... the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Priests who administer the Anointing of the Sick in hospitals and health care facilities should verify if an Anointing of the Sick registry exists on location and, if appropriate, may record such sacramental administrations accordingly.” (*Diocese of Rochester, Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments, General Principles: Key Policy Statements*).

6.4.1 Ministers of the Sacrament

- “Every priest and a priest alone validly administers the anointing of the sick.” (CIC, c. 1003, §1; Cf. CCC, no. 1530).
- “It must also be affirmed that the reservation of the ministry of Anointing to the priest is related to the connection of this Sacrament to the forgiveness of sin and the worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist. No other person may act as ordinary or extraordinary minister of the Sacrament since such constitutes simulation of the Sacrament.” (*Ecclesiae de Mysterio*, Article 9).
- “In using *sacramentals*, the non-ordained faithful should ensure that these are in no way regarded as Sacraments whose administration is proper and exclusive to the Bishop and to the priest. Since they are not priests, in no instance may [Deacons and] the non-ordained perform *anointings* either with the Oil of the Sick or any other oil.” (*Ecclesiae de Mysterio*, Article 9).
 - o A distinction must be made between the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and a devotional blessing, avoiding all confusion and appearance that a sacramental can replace, or is an alternative to, a Sacrament.
- “All priests to whom the care of souls has been entrusted have the duty and right of administering the Anointing of the Sick for the faithful entrusted to their pastoral office. For a reasonable cause, any other priest may administer this Sacrament with at least the presumed consent of the priest mentioned above.” (CIC, c. 1003, §2).

- “Any priest is permitted to carry blessed oil with him so that he is able to administer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in a case of necessity.” (*CIC*, c. 1003, §3).
- The matter proper for the Sacrament (*olea infirmorum*) is olive oil, blessed by the Bishop at the Chrism Mass each year. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 999).
 - In case of necessity, any priest may bless the oil of the sick, but only within the celebration of the Sacrament. (Cf. *PCS*, 21).
 - In these cases, olive oil is to be used, or, if unavailable, oil derived from plants, blessed within the celebration of the Sacrament, and burned following the anointing. (Cf. *PCS*, 20-22; *PCS*, 123, 140; *PCS*, 248).

6.4.2 Apostolic Pardon

- “Priests who minister the Sacraments to the Christian faithful who are in a life-and-death situation should not neglect to impart to them the Apostolic Blessing [Pardon], with its attached indulgence.” (*Handbook of Indulgences*, 28; *PCS: Rite for Emergencies*, 265).
- The priest may give the Apostolic Pardon for the dying, using the formula: “*Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May he open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy.*” (*Handbook of Indulgences*, no. 28; *PCS: Rite for Emergencies*, 265).

6.4.3 Viaticum

- “In addition to the Anointing of the Sick, the Church offers those who are about to leave this life the Eucharist as Viaticum. Communion in the body and blood of Christ, received at this moment of ‘passing over’ to the Father, has a particular significance and importance. It is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection, according to the words of the Lord: ‘He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.’ The Sacrament of Christ once dead and now risen, the Eucharist is here the Sacrament of passing over from death to life, from this world to the Father.” (*CCC*, no. 1524).
- “Viaticum, celebrated when death is close, will then be better understood as the last Sacrament of Christian life.” (*PCS: Viaticum*, 175).
- “The Sacrament [Holy Eucharist] should be described as sacred food which strengthens the Catholic for the passage through death to life in sure hope of the resurrection.” (*PCS: Viaticum*, 188).
- “Priests and other ministers entrusted with the spiritual care of the sick should do everything they can to ensure that those in proximate danger of death receive the Body and Blood of Christ as Viaticum.” (*PCS: Viaticum*, 176).
- “Thus, just as the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist form a unity called ‘the Sacraments of Christian Initiation,’ so too it can be said that Penance, the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist as viaticum constitute at the end of Christian life ‘the Sacraments that prepare for our heavenly homeland’ or the Sacraments that complete the earthly pilgrimage.” (*CCC*, no. 1525).

8. HOLY ORDERS

“By divine institution, the Sacrament of Orders establishes some among the Christian faithful as sacred ministers through an indelible character which marks them. They are consecrated and designated, each according to his grade, to nourish the people of God, fulfilling in the person of Christ the Head the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing.” (*CIC*, c. 1008).

“Holy Orders is the Sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time; thus, it is the Sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate.” (*CCC*, no. 1536; Cf. *CIC*, c. 1009 §1).

Each of these three degrees of Holy Orders are “conferred by the imposition of hands and the consecratory prayer which the liturgical books prescribe for the individual grades.” (*CIC*, c. 1009 §2).

8.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- “Episcopal consecration confers, together with the office of sanctifying, also the offices of teaching and ruling. . . . In fact . . . by the imposition of hands and through the words of the consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is given, and a sacred character is impressed in such ways that bishops, in an eminent and visible manner, take the place of Christ himself, teacher, shepherd, and priest, and act as his representative (*in Eius persona agant*).’ By virtue, therefore, of the Holy Spirit who has been given to them, bishops have been constituted true and authentic teachers of the faith and have been made pontiffs and pastors.” (*CCC*, no. 1558).
- “The priests, prudent cooperators of the episcopal college and its support and instrument, called to the service of the People of God, constitute, together with their bishop, a unique sacerdotal college (*presbyterium*) dedicated, it is true, to a variety of distinct duties. In each local assembly of the faithful they represent, in a certain sense, the bishop, with whom they are associated in all trust and generosity; in part they take upon themselves his duties and solicitude and in their daily toils discharge them.’ Priests can exercise their ministry only in dependence on the bishop and in communion with him. The promise of obedience they make to the bishop at the moment of ordination and the kiss of peace from him at the end of the ordination liturgy mean that the bishop considers them his co-workers, his sons, his brothers and his friends, and that they in return owe him love and obedience.” (*CCC*, no. 1567).
- Through the Rite of Ordination, a priest is given a share in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ. The “ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason it is transmitted by its own Sacrament, the Sacrament of Holy Orders.” (*CCC*, no. 1547).

- “Though they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the Eucharistic Sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist.” (*Lumen Gentium*, 10).
- “Priests ‘as ministers of the sacred, especially in the Sacrifice of the Mass, represent the person of Christ in a particular way. Because of... (this) sign value, it is therefore right that they take part in the Eucharist by exercising the order proper to them, that is, by celebrating or concelebrating the Mass.’” (*Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 43).
- “The Church teaches that priestly ordination is the indispensable condition for the valid celebration of the Eucharist. Indeed, ‘in the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, High Priest of the redemptive sacrifice.’ Certainly the ordained minister also acts ‘in the name of the whole Church, when presenting to God the prayer of the Church, and above all when offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice.’ As a result, priests should be conscious of the fact that in their ministry they must never put themselves or their personal opinions in first place, but Jesus Christ. Any attempt to make themselves the centre of the liturgical action contradicts their very identity as priests. The priest is above all a servant of others, and he must continually work at being a sign pointing to Christ, a docile instrument in the Lord’s hands. This is seen particularly in his humility in leading the liturgical assembly, in obedience to the rite, uniting himself to it in mind and heart, and avoiding anything that might give the impression of an inordinate emphasis on his own personality ... The priesthood, as Saint Augustine said, is *amoris officium*, it is the office of the Good Shepherd, who offers his life for his sheep (cf. John 10:14-15).” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 23).
- “Through the Rite of Ordination, a deacon is ordered ‘not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry. For, strengthened by sacramental grace, they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service of the liturgy, of the Gospel and of works of charity.’” (*Lumen Gentium*, 29).
- Every parish should pray frequently for the sanctity of all vocations, and, in particular, to offer prayers for vocations to the ministerial priesthood in the Diocese of Rochester, creating a culture of priestly vocations in their parishes.

8.2 CANDIDATES FOR THE PRIESTHOOD AND DIACONATE

- “The diocesan bishop or the competent superior is to take care that before candidates are promoted to any Order, they are instructed properly about those things which belong to the Order and its obligations.” (*CIC*, c. 1028).
- Admission requirements used by the Diocese of Rochester’s Office of Vocations are governed by the Fifth Edition (or always the most recent edition) of the *Program of Priestly Formation (PPF)*, promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Similarly, the norms found in the *PPF* oversee the spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and human formation program for accredited seminaries used by the Diocese of Rochester.

- Admission requirements used by the Diocese of Rochester's Office of the Permanent Diaconate is governed by the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, First Edition (or always the most recent edition), promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

8.3 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

- Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood are celebrations of great importance for the whole Church. The rites and ceremonies provide a thorough catechesis on the unity of the priesthood and the salvific ministry of those who are called, as well as the life of ordained service of a deacon.
- "Each person is to be ordained to the presbyterate or the diaconate by his proper bishop or with legitimate dimissorial letters from him." (*CIC*, c. 1015 §1).
- Concelebration by the priests of the Diocese at Ordination Masses with their Bishop is to be held in particularly high regard. Concelebrated Masses, on solemn days of the liturgical year, or any other occasion, are the norm whenever priests gather together with their own Bishop. (*Cf. GIRM*, 203).
- In the Diocese of Rochester, it is customary to renew priestly promises at the annual Chrism Mass celebrated during Holy Week.

9. THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Central to the Catholic faith is the paschal mystery: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “Christ achieved His task of redeeming humanity and giving perfect glory to God, principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 5).

The Funeral rites are an integral part of the pastoral care of the Church, who prays for the repose of the soul of the deceased while accompanying the family members and friends of the deceased from the moment of death to the time of burial. “At the Funeral rites, especially at the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Church community affirms and expresses the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in the one great communion of the saints.” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 6).

While the death of a family member or a loved one causes sorrow, the Church brings hope in eternal life and consolation to the living by proclaiming our faith in Jesus Christ who conquered sin and death.

9.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Catholic belief in death as the entrance into eternity, hope in the resurrection, recognition of the value of prayer for the deceased, reverence for the body which remains and the sense of mystery and sacredness which surround the end of earthly life are all reflected in the Church’s care for the deceased and the family and community of faith that survives them. Private prayer, united with the liturgical rites of the Church, help us to share in the Lord’s paschal mystery and to hope for eternal union with God.
- “The Church’s liturgical and sacramental life and proclamation of the Gospel make [the Paschal] mystery present in the life of the faithful.” (*OCF*, 2).
- “The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God’s merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins.” (*OCF*, 6).
- A funeral is not a celebration of the life of the deceased, but, as with all of the Church’s rites, a proclamation of the mysteries of Jesus Christ as they embrace the human experience and the deceased person.
- The time of death can be a time of evangelization and reconciliation for those who knew and loved the deceased. Priests, deacons and all members of the pastoral staff are to be ever-ready to minister to the bereaved.
- Family members or someone designated by the family should be invited into and involved in the planning and celebration of the funeral rites according to the liturgical norms of the Church and these diocesan policies.

- These rites, like all rites, do not belong to individuals, but are entrusted to the Church. All funeral rites must be coordinated through the parish with the knowledge of the pastor/administrator.
- “The funeral of any deceased member of the faithful should normally be celebrated in the church of that person’s proper parish.” (*CIC*, c. 1177, § 1).
- “However, any member of the faithful, or those in charge of the deceased person’s funeral, may choose another church; this requires the consent of the proper pastor and a notification to the proper parish priest of the deceased.” (*CIC*, c. 1177, § 2). This notification is made by the pastor/administrator hosting the funeral to the pastor/administrator of the deceased.
- “When death has occurred outside the person’s proper parish, and the body is not returned there, and another church has not been chosen, the funeral rites are to be celebrated in the church of the parish where the death occurred, unless another church has been designated by particular law.” (*CIC*, c. 1177, § 3).
- Parishes should be aware of the importance of hospitality for the bereaved family as well as the many visitors that may be present at a funeral liturgy. It is fitting for pastors/administrators and parish staff to assist members of the community in forming volunteer bereavement committees to provide hospitality at the time of the funeral and giving support to the family before and after the funeral.
- The *Order of Christian Funerals* (1989), with the accompanying “Appendix on Cremation” (1997), is to be used in the celebration of the funeral rites.
- Special sensitivity to ethnic/cultural diversity is important in the preparation of funeral rites, but always with due regard to the norms set forth in the *Order of Christian Funerals*.
- Mindful of the importance of a Christian funeral, the Church prescribes that “deceased members of the Christian faithful must be given ecclesiastical funerals according to the norm of law.” (*CIC*, c. 1176 § 1).
- Children, whose parents intended to have them baptized, but who died before Baptism have a right to a funeral. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1183 § 2).
- Catechumens are counted among Christ’s faithful, and as such, have a right to a Catholic funeral. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1183 § 1).
- “In the prudent judgment of the local ordinary, ecclesiastical funerals can be granted to baptized persons who are enrolled in a non-Catholic Church or ecclesial community unless their intention is evidently to the contrary and provided that their own minister is not available” (*CIC*, c. 1183 § 3).
- “Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, the following must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals:
 - o notorious apostates, heretics, and schismatics;
 - o those who chose the cremation of their bodies for reasons contrary to Christian faith;
 - o other manifest sinners who cannot be granted ecclesiastical funerals without public scandal of the faithful.If any doubt occurs, the local ordinary is to be consulted, and his judgment must be followed.” (*CIC*, c. 1184).

- People who find themselves alienated from God, the Church, family members or others often are moved by the experience of death and wish to become reconciled to God, the Church and others. Priests should be generous in extending that opportunity through the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation, hearing Confessions as time permits on the day of or evening before the Funeral Liturgy.
- An offering to the parish for funeral services is customary according to the current approved diocesan scale for such offerings. A funeral is never to be denied because of an inability to make an offering. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1181).
- The Funeral rites are comprised of three principal parts: the Vigil for the Deceased; the Funeral Liturgy (the Mass, the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral); and the Rite of Committal.

9.2 THE VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED

- The Vigil for the Deceased, commonly known as The Wake, allows the family members and friends to remember the deceased in the context of faithful trust and prayerful thanksgiving.
- The Vigil for the Deceased, the Office of the Dead, and other prayer services help express the Church's faith in the paschal mystery and to console and strengthen the mourners with Sacred Scripture and the prayers of the Church.
- The Vigil for the Deceased provides an excellent opportunity to recall the memories and events that have been a part of the deceased's life.
- Effective catechesis stresses the value of this time of Vigil, and of calling hours. Pastors/ administrators, parish staff and funeral directors can work together with the family to insure the benefits of this time.
- "The Vigil may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, in the funeral home, parlor or chapel of rest, or in some other suitable place." (*OCF*, 55). With the pastor's/administrator's permission, it may also be celebrated in the church, but at a time well before the funeral liturgy. (Cf. *OCF*, 55). It is advisable to schedule the Vigil at a specific time.
- Forms of devotional prayer, such as the Rosary, are also appropriate during the course of the Vigil, but should not to take the place of the official prayer of the Church, the Vigil for the Deceased. Participation of those present is to be encouraged.
- Care should be taken that these rites are celebrated with reverence and respect for their religious nature.

9.3 THE FUNERAL LITURGY

- "When one of its members dies, the Church encourages the celebration of the Mass." (*OCF*, 154).
- "The Funeral Liturgy (a Funeral Mass or, in rare circumstances, the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass) is the central liturgical celebration of the Christian community for the deceased." (*OCF*, 128).

- “Among the Masses for the Dead, the Funeral Mass holds first place. It may be celebrated on any day except for Solemnities that are Holydays of Obligation, Thursday of Holy Week (Holy Thursday), the Paschal Triduum, and the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, with due regard also for all the other requirements of the norm of the law.” (*GIRM*, 380).
- Since the proper setting for Mass is a sacred place, Mass is celebrated in a church and not in a funeral home or similar facility. (Cf. *CIC*, c 932 §1; *CIC*, c. 1228; *Diocese of Rochester, Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments*, 2.1).
- “The liturgical color chosen for funerals should express Christian hope but should not be offensive to human grief or sorrow. In the United States, white, violet, or black vestments may be worn at the funeral rites and at other offices and Masses for the Dead.” (*OCF*, 39).
- “The reading of Scripture during a Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done by members of that Church [the Catholic Church].” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 133). Readers are fully initiated, practicing Catholics, who are “truly suited to carrying out this function” (*GIRM*, 101), and whose lives witness to the Word of God which they proclaim. Proper training is necessary.
 - “On exceptional occasions and for a just cause, the Bishop of the Diocese may permit a member of another Church or ecclesial Community to take on the task of reader.” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 133). While maintaining that a Catholic in good standing serve as a reader at a funeral Mass, permission is granted in exceptional circumstances for a non-Catholic Christian, whose life witnesses to the Word of God, to read with the consent of the pastor/administrator.
- At the Funeral Masses, there is a brief Homily by the priest or deacon, “but to the exclusion of a funeral eulogy of any kind.” (*GIRM*, 382). Carefully selected illustrations from the deceased person’s life may be used, if appropriate.
 - “A brief homily based on the readings is always given after the Gospel reading...but there is never to be a eulogy.” (*OCF*, 27; Cf. *GIRM*, 382).
 - The homily relates Christian death to the paschal mystery of our Lord’s death and resurrection. Attentive to the grief of those present, the homily properly includes an expression of praise and gratitude to God for the gift of a Christian life and such virtues or strengths apparent in the deceased’s life.
- Since the Most Holy Eucharist is “the wonderful Sacrament... by which the unity of the Church is both signified and brought about,” (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 2.), “Eucharistic communion is inseparably linked to full ecclesial communion and its visible expression.” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 129; Cf. *Diocese of Rochester, Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments*, 2.3).
 - Noting that sad divisions do exist, parishes nonetheless welcome to the Funeral Mass non-practicing Catholics, people of all faiths, or no faith, to come to pray and mourn a deceased family member or friend. Those who may attend Catholic liturgies who are not familiar with Catholic worship and teaching benefit greatly from honest and charitable guidance regarding the norms governing the reception of Eucharistic Communion.
 - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ 1996 statement, *Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion*, is to be followed. The statement is available at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/guidelines-for-the-reception-of-communion.cfm>

9.3.1 FUNERAL MUSIC

- “Music is integral to the funeral rites ... The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord’s suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from Scripture.” (*OCE*, 30).
- The music which is chosen for the celebration of these rites can play a powerful role in supporting, consoling, and uplifting the participants, helping “to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ’s victory over death and in the Christian’s share in that victory.” (*OCE*, 31).
- “Music should never be used to memorialize the deceased, but rather to give praise to the Lord, whose Paschal Sacrifice has freed us from the bonds of death.” (*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, 248).
- Even when popular/secular music has special meaning to the deceased or the mourners, such works are inappropriate for use in liturgical celebrations.
- The use of pre-recorded music “lacks the authenticity provided by the living liturgical assembly gathered for the Sacred Liturgy” (*Sing to the Lord*, 93) and should not be used within the Church’s funeral rites.
- Music ministers are to receive remuneration according to the current approved diocesan scale for such services, posted and available on Lotus notes. However, the funeral rites should not be diminished because of the inability of the deceased family to make an offering. In charity, the parish should make adequate provision for music.

9.4 WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

- Words of Remembrance are not required, but if permitted by the pastor/administrator, take place in this order of preference:
 1. at the conclusion of the Vigil for the Deceased, after the Concluding Prayer, before the Blessing and Dismissal;
 2. at a reception following the Funeral Mass;
 3. at the conclusion of the Rite of Committal at the cemetery;
 4. At the Funeral Liturgy:
 - o at a Funeral Mass, after the Prayer after Communion and before the Final Commendation (*OCE*, 170). For pastoral reasons, Words of Remembrance may instead be given prior to the beginning of the Funeral Mass, before the Collect is prayed;
 - o at Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass, after the Lord’s Prayer and before the Final Commendation.
- The Diocesan Policy for Words of Remembrance at a Funeral Liturgy (see *Addendum 1*) are to be followed in all circumstances.
- Should a family member or friend be designated to offer Words of Remembrance, *Addendum 2* should be given to the person as soon as possible to guide his/her preparation.
- The pastor/administrator may legitimately establish a parish policy of not permitting Words of Remembrance at a Funeral liturgy.

9.5 CREMATION AND CATHOLIC FUNERALS

- “The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed; it does not, however, forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching.” (*CIC*, c. 1176).
- “Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites.” (*OCF*, 413).
- “The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition.” (*OCF*, 416).

9.5.1 Cremation Following the Funeral

- When the body of the deceased is to be cremated, this is ordinarily done following the Funeral Liturgy. In this case, the Vigil for the Deceased and the Funeral Liturgy itself are celebrated as normal, with the body present. Following the Funeral Liturgy, the body is cremated, and the remains of the individual are then buried or entombed using a form of the Rite of Committal. This permits the presence of the body at the Funeral Liturgy serving as a Christian expression of the sanctity of the body of the deceased and the hope of the resurrection.

9.5.2 Cremation Before the Funeral

- This option may be chosen “when extraordinary circumstances make the cremation of a body the only feasible choice.” (*OCF*, 415). In this case, Appendix 2 of the *Order of Christian Funerals* is used.

9.5.3 Burial of Cremated Remains

- Since the human body has an eternal destiny, the Church requires that cremated remains of a body be buried or entombed immediately after the Funeral in the same timely manner as a body.
 - o “The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium.” (*OCF*, 416).
 - o “The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires.” (*OCF*, 416).
 - o “Whenever possible, appropriate means for recording with dignity the memory of the deceased should be adopted, such as a plaque or stone which records the name of the deceased.” (*OCF*, 415).
 - o It is not appropriate for cremated remains to be divided among family members or to be included in jewelry, which render impossible proper burial.

9.6 THE RITE OF COMMITTAL

- The Rite of Committal, the conclusion of the funeral rites, entrusts the body to its resting place with the Church's expression of hope, awaiting the resurrection of the body.
- Catholic Cemeteries exist for a prayerful resting place memorializing the existence of deceased men and women who now await the resurrection of the body in Christ. "If this cannot be achieved, however, then individual graves are to be properly blessed." (*CIC*, c. 1240 §2).

9.7 CONTINUED PASTORAL OUTREACH AND REMEMBRANCE OF THE DECEASED

- The weeks and months following a death in the family may be difficult. Prayer and participation in the life of the Church provide comfort and a way of continuing the relationship with the deceased family member in the communion of the saints. Visits to the cemetery also provide comfort and an ongoing assurance of the Church's hope in the resurrection of the dead.
- Preeminent among these remembrances is the request for Masses to be offered for the deceased, perhaps on the anniversary of his/her birth, death, etc.
 - o "For us who profess the Catholic faith, there is no better way to cherish the memory of our beloved dead than to have Holy Mass offered for them. The Mass also renews our belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the eternal life wrought by His rising from the dead." (*Bishop Matano's Pastoral Letter on Christian Funerals and the Month of All Souls, November, 2014*).
 - o "From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God." (*CCC*, no. 1032).
 - o Additionally, the month of November is dedicated to All Souls, and parish remembrances are encouraged with designated Masses for parishioners who have died.

ADDENDUM 1:

NORMS FOR WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE AT FUNERAL LITURGIES IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

The inclusion of Words of Remembrance in the 1989 *Order of Christian Funerals* is permitted, but not required, and is at the discretion of the pastor/administrator. These Words of Remembrance may occur at the Vigil of the Deceased (Cf. *OCF*, 62, 80), at a reception following the Funeral Liturgy, at the conclusion of the Rite of Committal at the cemetery, or at the Funeral Liturgy. (*OCF*, 170).

The provision that “a member or a friend of the family may speak in remembrance of the deceased” (Cf. *OCF*, 80, 170, 197) has often led to a confusion between these Words of Remembrance and a eulogy. A eulogy recounts some or all of the significant events in the life of the deceased. Biographical in nature, a eulogy tends to be lengthy and similar to a curriculum vitae. However, Words of Remembrance provide briefly some insight into the Catholic faith and values of the deceased as seen through the lens of one or two examples from his/her life. In some instances, the inclusion of Words of Remembrance in the Funeral Liturgy has become problematic, such that:

- o The flow and dignity of the Sacred Liturgy is disrupted by the multiplication of speakers (scheduled or not).
- o An inappropriate and embarrassing choice of stories about and characterizations of the deceased are not infrequently made.
- o The need of those in the assembly to return to work and other responsibilities, and the schedules of the parish, cemetery workers and military honor guards are not respected when the Funeral Liturgy is overly extended by Words of Remembrance.

The following norms are meant to assist pastors/administrators, pastoral staff and funeral directors to develop appropriate and clear practices in guiding those who speak in remembrance of the dead:

- 1) One person only speaks in the name of all when the Words of Remembrance occur at the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy outside Mass.
- 2) These Words of Remembrance should be brief, no more than 5 minutes (one typed page, approximately 450 words). The speaker should be reminded that these words are within the good flow and dignity of the liturgy, and need to take into consideration the schedules of those who are part of this event.
- 3) The Words of Remembrance should be prepared beforehand, and ideally reviewed with the priest beforehand, to avoid undue length or embarrassing situations.
- 4) The proper time for the representative to speak at the Funeral Liturgy is:
 - o at a Funeral Mass: after the Prayer after Communion and before the Final Commendation (*OCF*, 170); (For pastoral reasons, the priest may instead ask you to offer the Words of Remembrance prior to the beginning of the Funeral Mass, before the Collect is prayed);
 - o at Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass: after the Lord’s Prayer and before the Final Commendation.

ADDENDUM 2:

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Thank you for accepting the responsibility of speaking Words of Remembrance on behalf of the family and friends of the deceased. Here are some points to guide you in the preparation of what you will say. Out of respect for the Church's prudential wisdom and teaching in this regard, please read and observe these guidelines carefully.

1. **You have been asked to offer "Words of Remembrance," not a eulogy.** A eulogy tends to tell the story of a person's whole life and accomplishments, and can become lengthy. Words of Remembrance provide briefly **some insight into the faith and Christian values of the deceased** as seen in one or two representative example from his/her life. The Words of Remembrance, then, become words of encouragement and comfort to those who are present.

2. Since they occur within the Church's worship of God and of prayer for the deceased and those who mourn his/her loss, the Words of Remembrance should be **no more than 5 minutes (a single type-written page, approximately 450 words)**. Keeping your remarks brief and to-the-point recognizes not only the integrity of the liturgy, but also the fact that people have often made a sacrifice to be present. Brevity is the kindest and most appreciated consideration you can give them.

3. There may be some in the congregation who did not know the deceased, but have come in support of the family. Therefore, **"inside" stories about the deceased may not be understood**. Save such remembrances for the more personal moments with the family, especially during the painful days and weeks after the funeral. The time for the Words of Remembrance is not a time for lengthy story-telling. Your comments should show respect and sensitivity for the deceased and those who are present to pray.

4. Before you begin to compose the Words of Remembrance **seek help from God by starting in prayer**, that you will be enabled to speak in a way worthy of the occasion. Ask suggestions from friends and family.

5. **Write out your remarks in full.** Writing out the complete text will insure that you stay within the time limitation. The priest, deacon or a member of the parish staff may be available to preview your remarks and make helpful suggestions. Rely on their judgment and experience.

6. **Rehearse your Words of Remembrance before a friend or family member.** If there are deep emotions that need to be dealt with, rehearsal is the time to express them. While a public display of emotion is understandable and sometimes laudable, copious tears and uncontrollable sobbing before the congregation will not be beneficial. The use of a written text is helpful.

7. Before the Funeral Liturgy begins, ask the priest, deacon or a member of the parish staff to show you exactly **where you are to speak**. Familiarize yourself with the location and, if possible, listen to yourself say a few words into the microphone.

8. The priest or deacon will introduce you at the proper time, so that you will know exactly when you are to come forward. **Approach the podium or lectern with great confidence.** To begin with expressions like "I'm not used to this sort of thing," or "I hope I can get through this," defeats you before you ever begin.

